

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 VO-03 SCA-01 DHA-02 ORM-02

INSE-00 CIAE-00 /044 W

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R 161545Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4258

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2232

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CVIS, UR, US, LE

SUBJECT: EMIGRATION OF SOVIET ARMENIANS

REF: A) 76 MOSCOW 7704, B) 75 MOCOW 13970

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING RECENT INDICATION THAT SOME ARMENIANS ARE NOW RECEIVING LEBANESE VISAS, CONSOFF DISCUSSED EMIGRATION WITH LEBANESE EMBOFF. LEBANESE EMBASSY HAS RECENTLY BEGUN TO ISSUE ENTRY VISAS ON CASE-BY-CASE BASIS TO SOVIET ARMENIANS, BUT NUMBERS REMAIN SMALL. LEBANESE MAY PERMIT MODERATE INCREASE IN IMMIGRATION, BUT DISAPPOINTING PERFORMANCE (FROM CHRISTIAN VIEWPOINT) OF ARMEANIAN IMMIGRANTS DURING LEBANESE CIVIL WAR MAKES IT UNLIKELY THAT LEBANESE AUTHROITIES WILL DO AS MUCH TO FACILITATE EMIGRATION AS THEY DID IN PRE-1975 PERIOD.  
END SUMMARY.

2. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, INCREASED ARMENIAN EMIGRATION TO US DURING 1976 (UP FORM 455 IN 1975 TO 1782 IN 1976) WAS DUE IN LARGE PART TO HALT IN ARMENIAN EMIGRATION TO LEBANON COMBINED WITH FACT THAT MANY ARMENIANS WHO ORIGINALLY HAD EXIT PERMISSION FOR LEBANON WERE ABLE TO SWITCH IT TO US. WE WERE RECENTLY INFORMED  
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BY SOVIET ARMENIAN WHO WISHED TO EMIGRATE TO US THAT HE HAD RECEIVED EXIT PERMISSION FOR LEBANON AND HAD SUCCEDED IN OBTAINING LEBANESE VISA. THIS WAS FIRST INDICATION WE HAD OF CHANGE IN LEGANESE IMMIGRATION POLICY AND CONSOFF REQUESTED MEETING WITH LEBANESE EMBOFF TO DISCUSS EMIGRATIION SITUATION MORE FULLY.

3. LEBANESE EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY MELHEM MISTOU (STRICLTY

PROTEC) REPORTED THAT AS RESULT OF CHANGED INSTRUCTIONS, EMBASSY BEGAN ISSUING ENTRY VISAS TO SOVIET ARMENIANS ON CASE-BY-CASE BASIS IN MID-JANUARY. AMBASSADOR APPROVES EACH VISA ISSUANCE, OF WHICH THERE HAVE BEEN TWENTY TO TWENTY-FIVE THUS FAR. ARMENIAN IMMIGRATION TO LEBANON PEAKED IN 1974 AT ABOUT 4,000 AND WAS CUT OFF IN JUNE 1975 BECAUSE SOVIET ARMENIAN IMMIGRANTS TO LEBANON, WHO TOALED ABOUT 12,000 AT THAT TIME, WERE NOT SUPPORTING CHRISTIANS IN CIVIL WAR, BUT REMAINING NEUTRAL OR IN SOME CASES SUPPORTING MUSLIMS AND PALESTINIANS AND WERE SUBJECT TO PRESSURE BY ARMENIAN COMMUNIST PARTY ORGAINZATION WITHIN LEBANON. MISTOU, WHO HAS BEEN IN MOSCOW SINCE EARLY 1972, SAID THAT ENTIRE EMBASSY STAFF FORM AMBASSADOR DOWN WA CHRISTIAN AND UNTIL JUNE 9175 OPERATING UNDER QUOTE SECRET INSTRUCTIONS UNQUOTE TO ENCOURAGE ARMENIAN EMIGRATION BECUASE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS HOPED THAT ARMENIAN IMMIGRANTS WOULD BE ALLIES IN STRUGGLE THEY COULD SEE WAS COMING. AS RESULT, EMBASSY DENIED VISAS TO ONLY ABOUT A DOZEN SOVIET ARMENIAN APPLICANTS DURING 1972 TO JUNE 1975 PERIOD.

4. MISTOU IS PERSONALLY SOMEWHAT BITTER ABOUT FAILURE OF ARMENIANS TO SUPPORT LEBANESE CHRISITANS MORE STRONGLY. BECUASE OF THIS EXPERIENCE, HE DOUBTS THAT LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WILL AGAIN DO AS MUCHAS IT DID TO FACILITATE SOVIET ARMENIAN EMIGRATION PRIOR O CIVIL WAR. HE DOES EXPECT FURTHER MODIFICATION OF INSTRUCTIONS IN MID-MARCH, BUT OFFERED NO FURTHER CLUES TO THEIR NATURE.

5. COMMENT: WE HAVE HAD A FEW INDICATIONS THAT ARMENIAN AUTHORITIES ARE BEGINNING TO TIGHTEN STRANDS FOR ISSUANCE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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EXIT VISAS TO US, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT SEEN EVIDENCE TO DATE THAT THE TIGHTENING IS RELATED TO LEBANESE ENTRY VISAS ISSUANCE. RECIPIENT OF LEBANESE VISA WHO FIRST BROUGHT CHANGE IN LEBANESE POLICY TO OUR ATTENTION HAD INVITATION FROM US RELATIVES AND PRIOR TO RECEIVING EXIT PERMISSION FOR LEBAON TRIED WITHOUT SUCCESS TO CHANGE APPLICATION TO US. WE HAVE ALSO HAD SEVERAL LETTERS RECENTLY FROM SOVIET ARMEANIANS WHO HAVE BEEN REFUSED EXIT PERMISSION FOR US BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON GROUNDS INVITATIONS WERE FROM PERSONS WHOSE FAMILY RELATIONSHIP WAS TOO DISTANT. THIS COMBINATION OF CIRCUMSTATANCES MAY LEAD TO LOWER SOVIET ARMEANIAN EMIGRATION TO US IN 1977. ( JANUARY ARMENIAN EMIGRATION REMAINED HIGH (190), BUT EMBASSY PROCESSED ONLY 68 TCP AND IV OF ALL NATIONALITIES FEBRUARY 1 THROUGH 15 AND HAS 88 OF ALL NATIONALITIES SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 1 THROUGH 15.) WE WOULD EXPECT, HOWEVER, TO EXPERIENCE INCREASE IN APPEALS FOR USG INTERVENTION ON BEHALF ARMENIANS REFUSED EXIT PERMISSION TO US, SINCE LEBANON DOES NOT AT THIS POINT PRESENT ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVE IN EYES OF WOULD-BE ARMENIAN

EMIGRANTS.

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## Message Attributes

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